

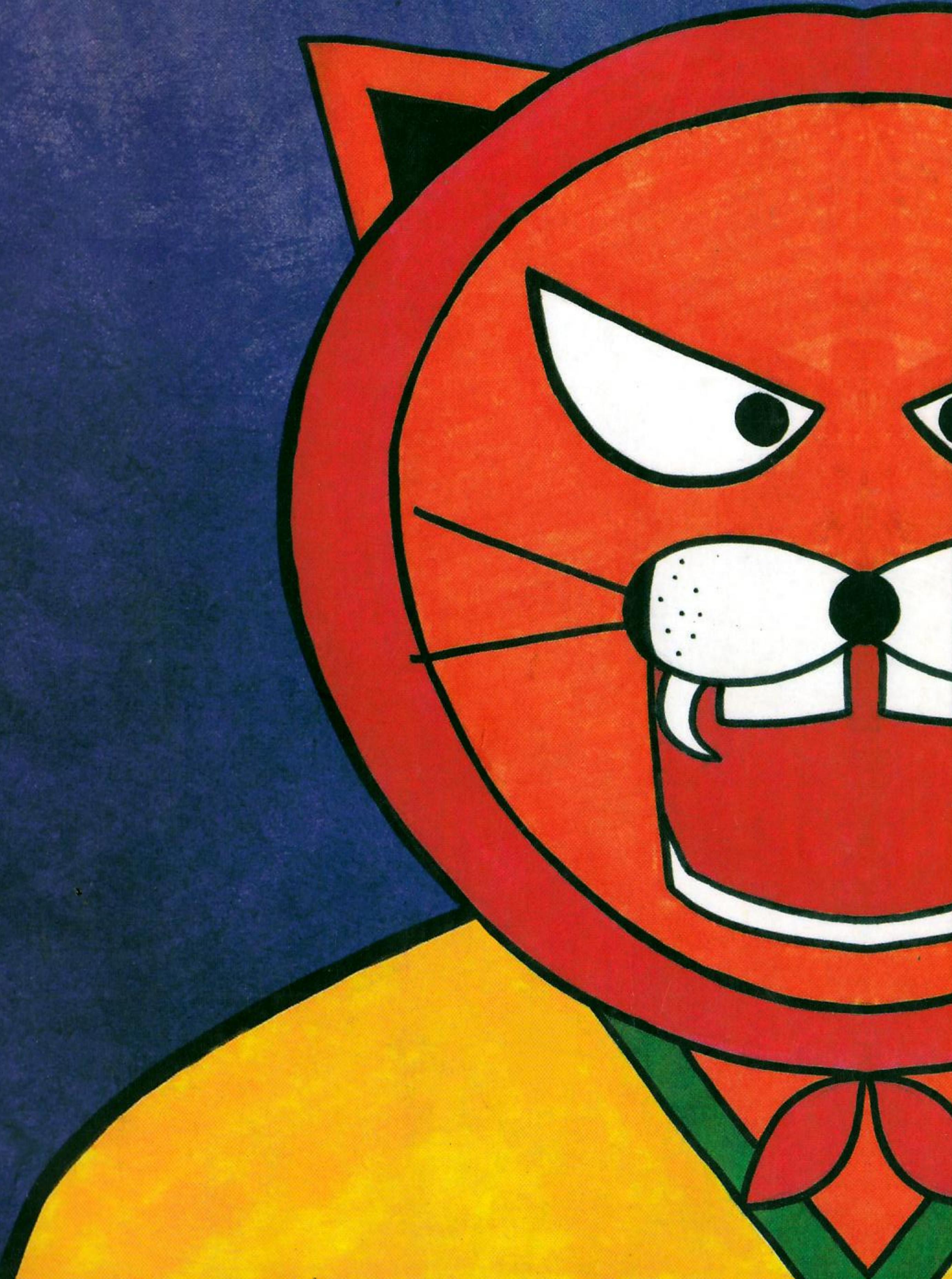
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# HIGH IN THE SKY

A Korean folktale

RETOLD by Cathy Spagnoli

ILLUSTRATED by Jo Hye-Mi





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A Korean folktale

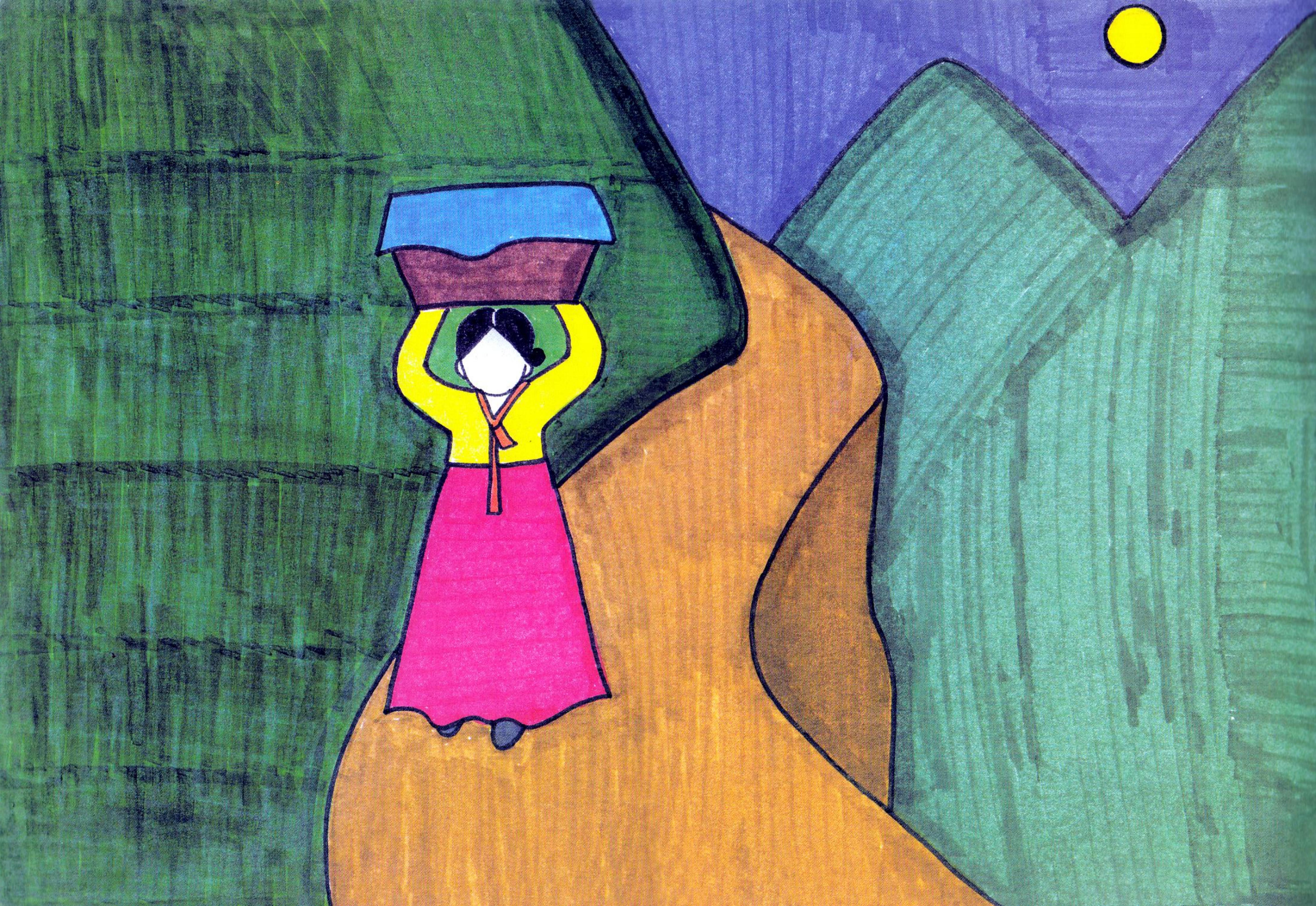
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Once in Korea, when tigers smoked long pipes,  
a mother lived in a lovely village with her two  
children. She worked hard to feed her small family.

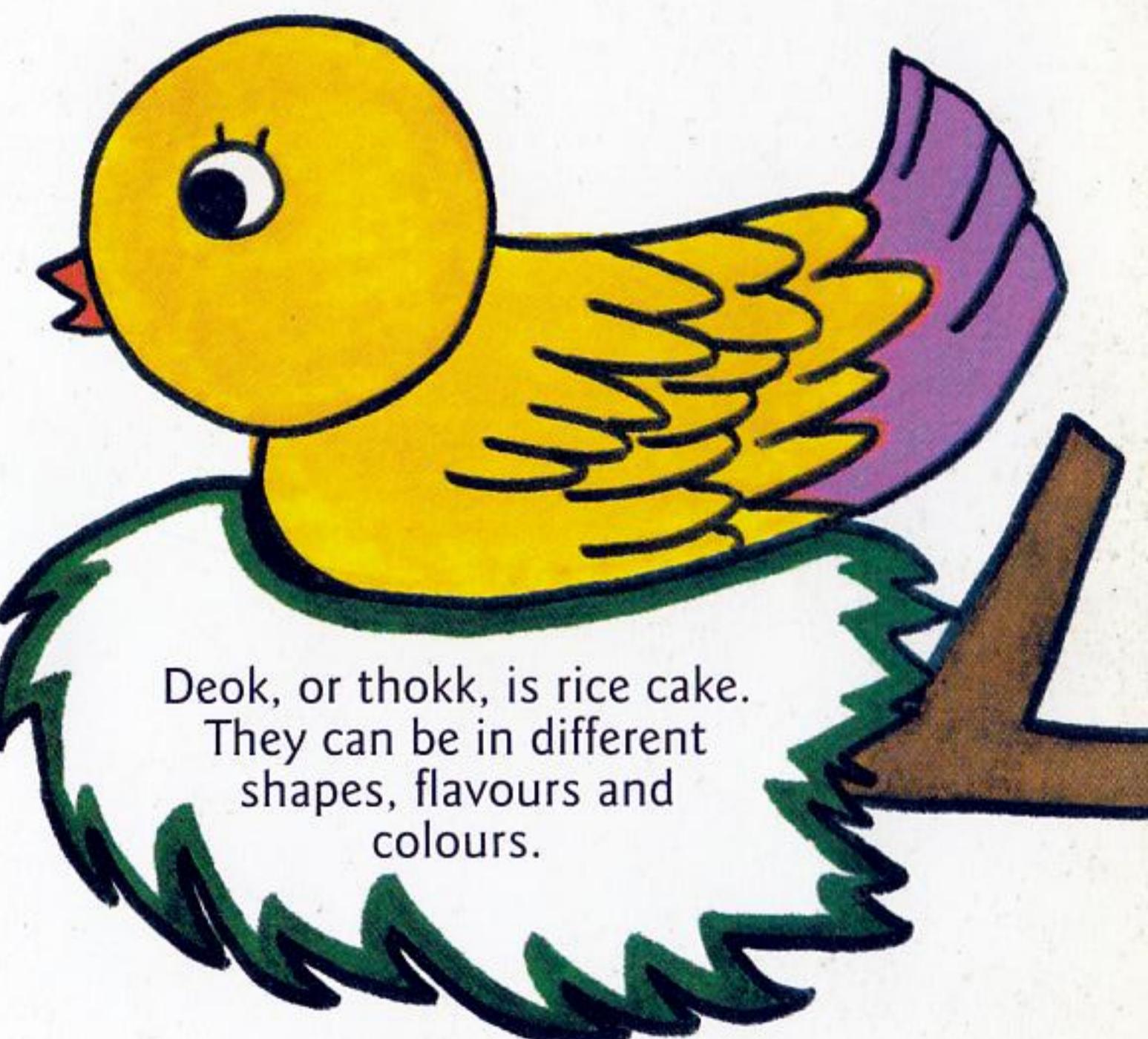
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Every day, she made deok to sell.

Every day, she walked through the forests or  
over the mountain to sell her deok.

And every day, she warned her children to  
beware of the fierce tigers who lived nearby.



Deok, or thokk, is rice cake.  
They can be in different  
shapes, flavours and  
colours.



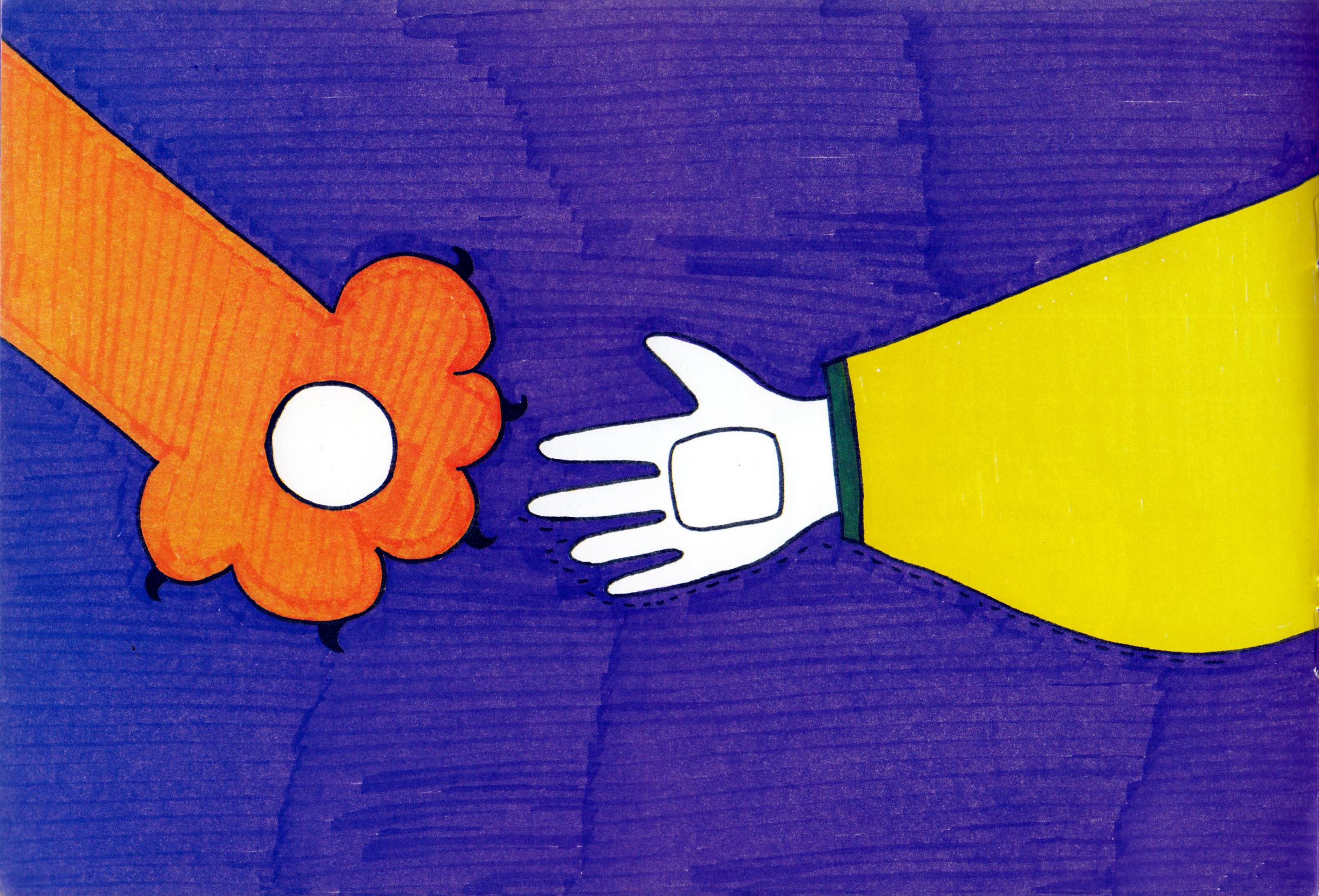
One day, as usual, she said, "Children, I'll go now. Remember, only open the door when you hear my voice."

The children promised to be careful, and she left with her basket of deok.

Up the mountain she walked, du-bug, du-bug.

But all of a sudden, a huge tiger jumped out with a great growl: "AU-HEUNG!"





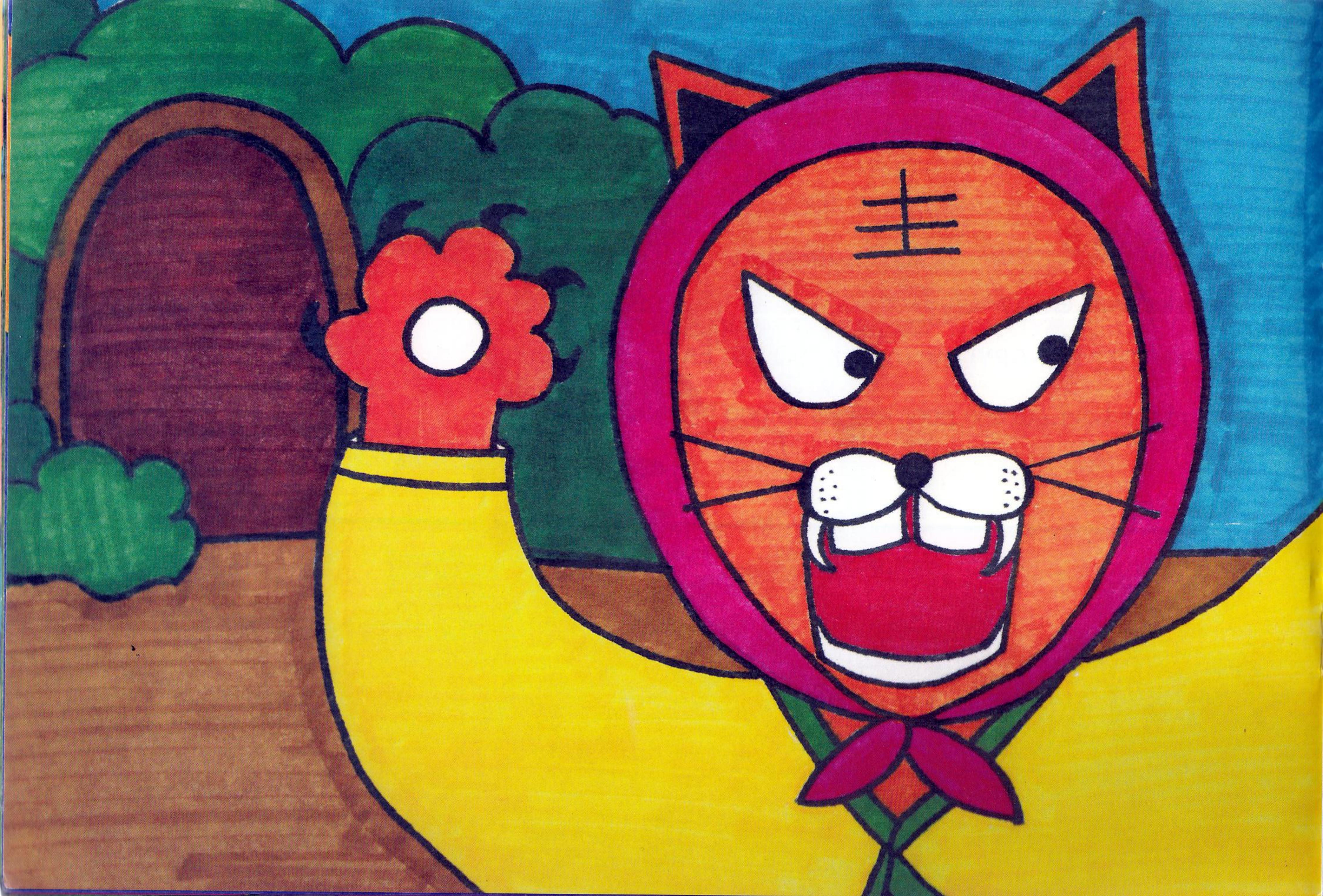
"I'm HUNGRY!" he roared, so she quickly gave him some deok.

"I want MORE!" he growled, so she gave him more.

"MORE! MORE!" he shouted, as she gave and gave until her basket was empty.

"I'M STILL HUNGRY!" he roared. "SO I'LL EAT YOU!"

And the tiger ate the poor mother in one big gulp.



But he was still hungry.

"Ah, her children!" he thought. He raced to the village and found the house.

"Children, open the DOOR, it's your MOTHER!" he cried, trying to change his voice.

"That doesn't sound like mother," said the children.

"Hurry, children, I'm your MOTHER!" said the tiger.

"That's not her voice. You're trying to trick us," the children cried. "Go away!"

The tiger returned to his cave and did voice exercises.

"Um, um, um, ma, ma, ma," he practised, over and over again, until his voice sounded very much like the mother's.

Back to the house he went.

"Children, quickly open the door," he said softly.

"That sounds like mother," said the children.

So they opened the door and...



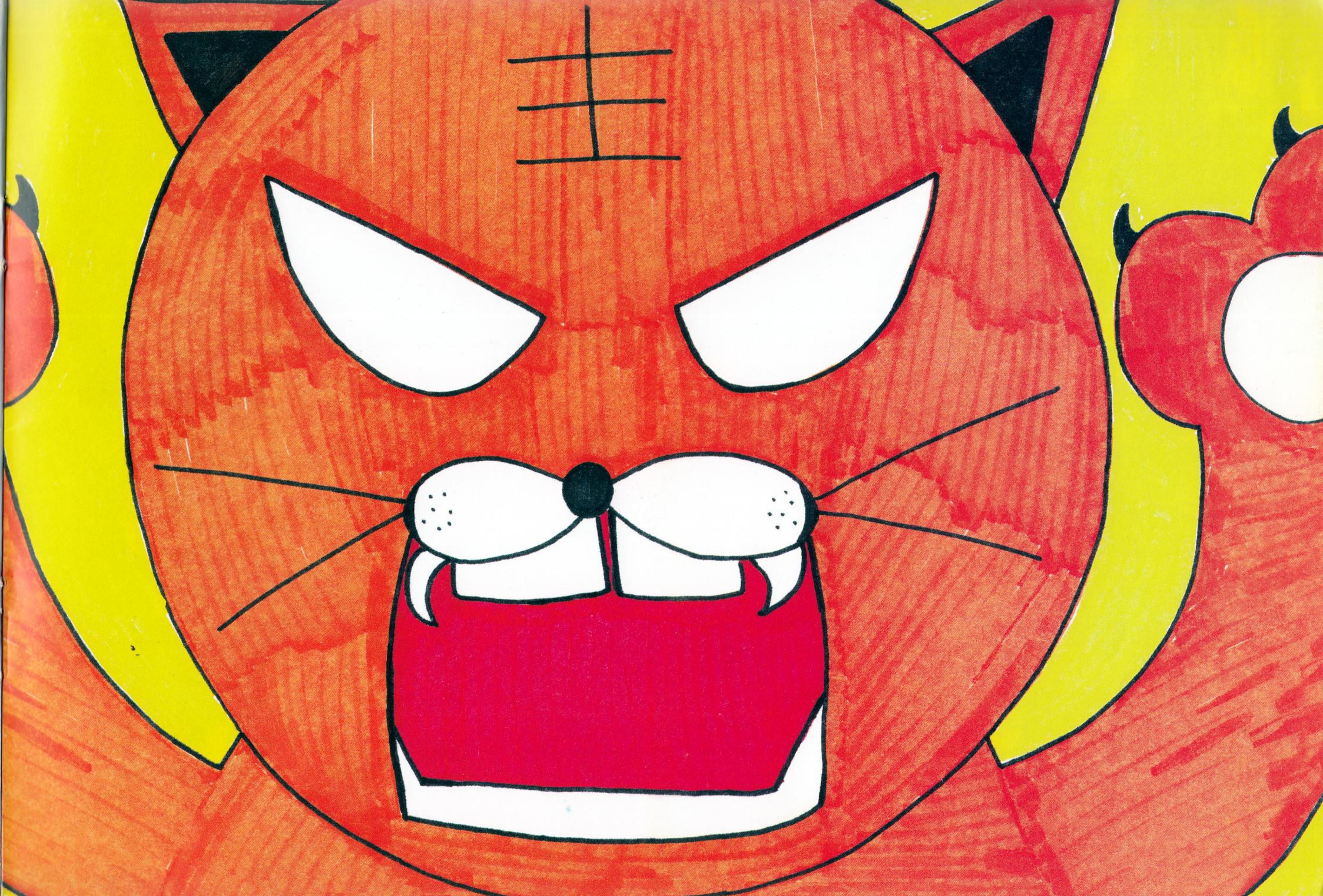
"AU-HEUNG!" roared the tiger, jumping at them.

"Umma, Umma!" cried the children, calling for their mother.

"Ummmma!" they shouted as the tiger chased them all over the room.

Then they raced outside and ran round and round and round the well with the tiger right behind.



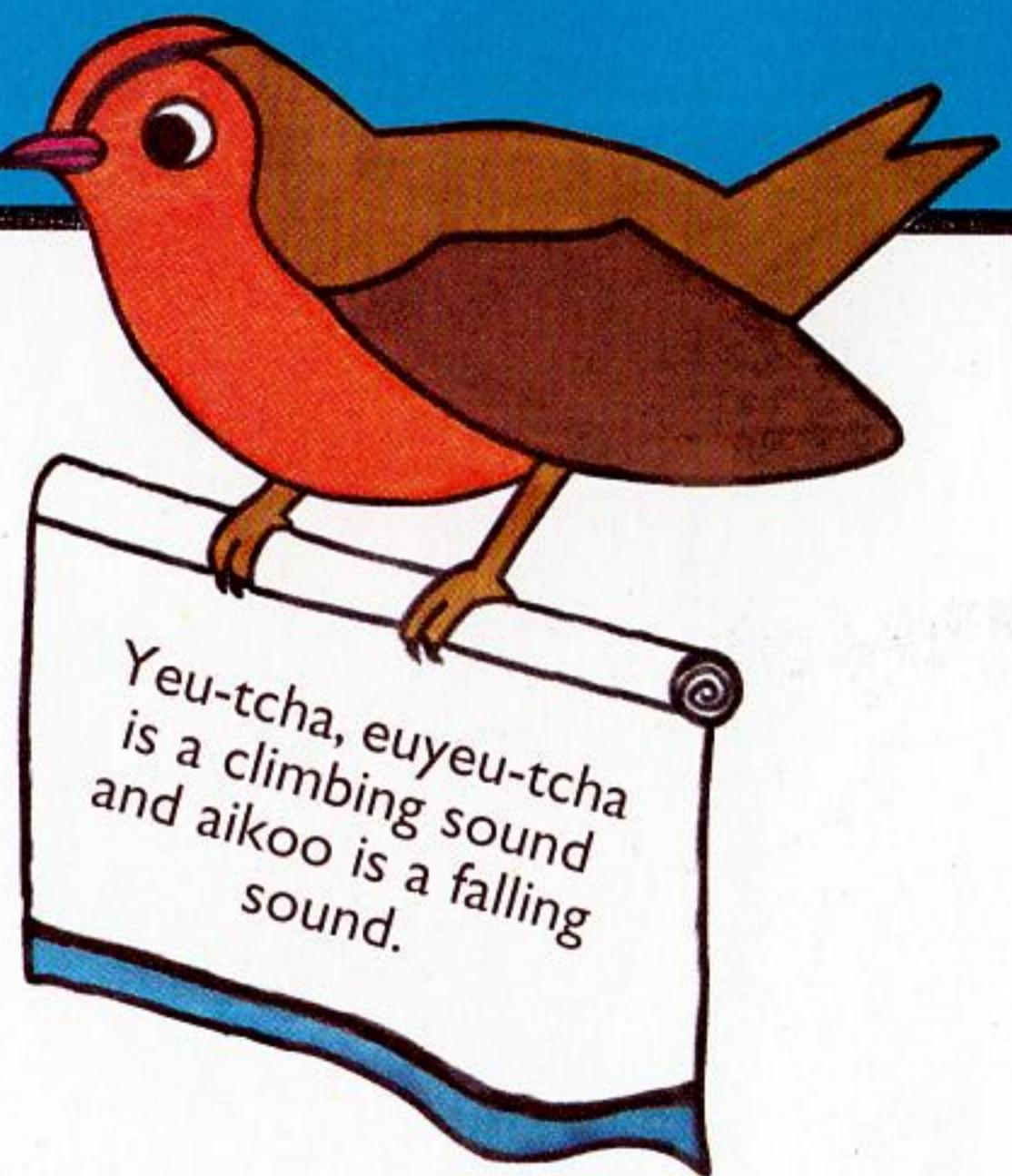


"Help! Please help!" the children cried to the heavens.

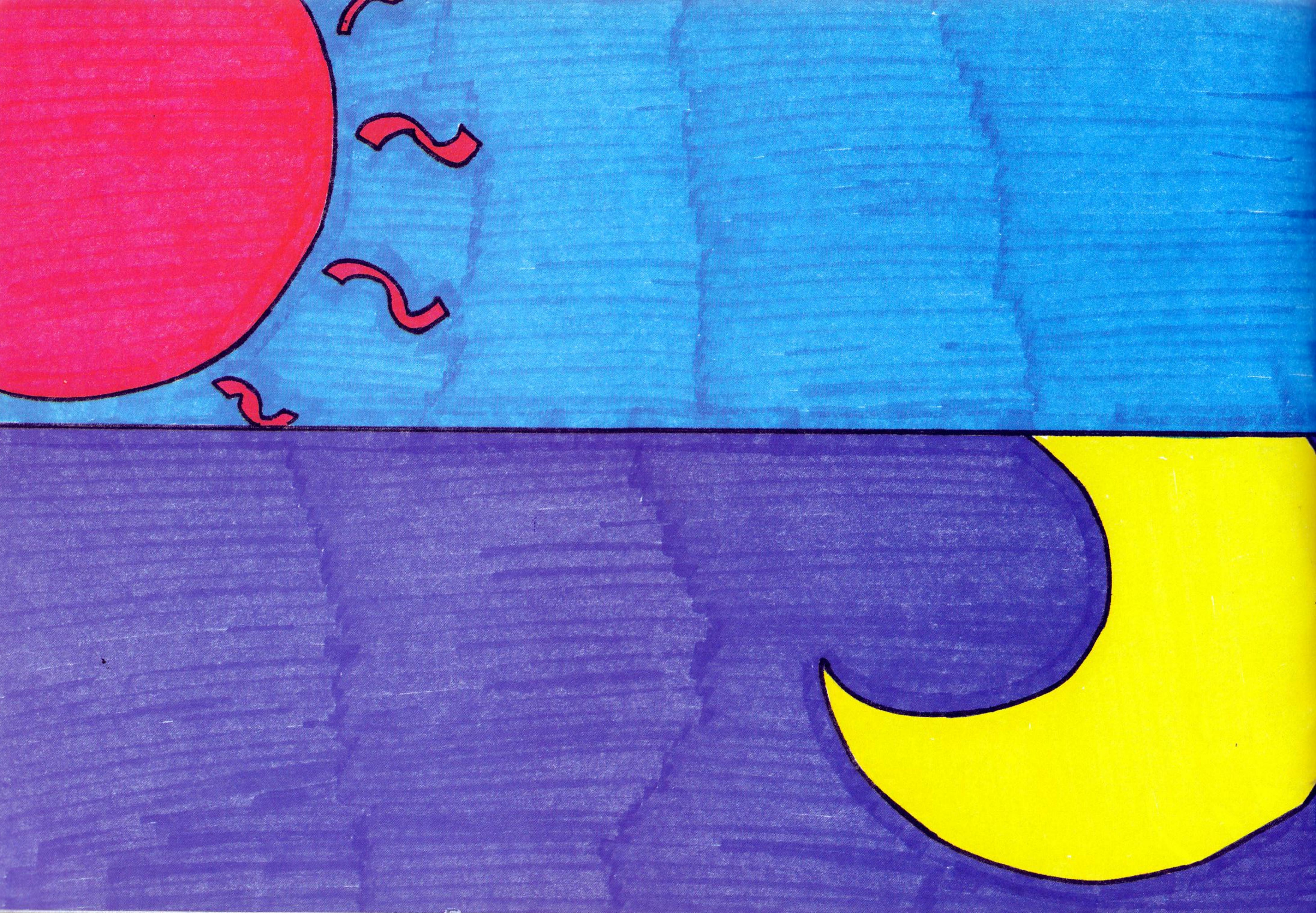
Just then, a strong rope came down from the sky. The children jumped on it and, yeu-tcha, euyeu-tcha, they climbed quickly up and out of the tiger's reach.

"SEND ME A ROPE TOO!" the tiger roared and another rope came down. He jumped on it and started climbing up.

But the tiger was too heavy. All at once the rope broke and – AI-KOO! – he fell to the ground.







At last the two children reached the safety of  
the sky.

There, they turned into the moon and the sun.

And even today they stay in the sky, looking after  
all of us here below.

गर्वारे भासुभवन  
पूर्ण



Wordbird Books feature traditional and contemporary stories emphasising the similarities and differences in this, our one world. Unfamiliar words and ideas are explained with the help of Wordbirds that streak across the pages, giving readers access to a multicultural, multilingual vocabulary.

I very gratefully dedicate this book to those who have helped me so much over the years:

Yong Jin Choi, The Korea Society, N.Y., who inspires me greatly as she helps countless American educators to learn about Korea; Sunmi Pak, who continues to share the best of Korean values and tales with me; and the students and staff at Hannam University, Daejeon, Korea, who welcomed me so warmly and shared their rich stories so generously.

A special thanks to InKo Centre, Chennai, that organised the storytelling session that inspired this book. — Cathy Spagnoli

### High in the Sky (English)

© text Cathy Spagnoli

© illustrations Jo Hye-Mi

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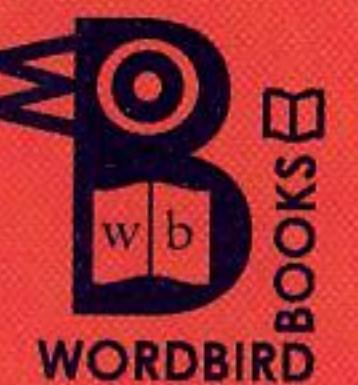
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InKo  
centre

Tulika



The tiger, a popular character in Korean art and folktales, is a villain in this origin tale. Having gobbled up the rice cake seller and all her rice cakes, the tiger chases her two small children. But they escape. And the tiger? Although in the traditional ending the tiger too dies, in this story what happens to the tiger is... AI-KOO! Wordbirds explain the meaning of that and other Korean words and expressions. The bold, colourful illustrations draw inspiration from the simple drama of the story cards of kamishibai, Japanese paper theatre.

**Cathy Spagnoli** tells tales in a computer age and her listeners love it! A professional storyteller for over 25 years, she has a special interest in Asian tales and has written many books and articles about them. She lives in the USA as well as in Chennai, India.

**Jo Hye-Mi** learnt the kamishibai style in Cathy Spagnoli's storytelling class at Hannam University, Daejon, Korea, where she was a student. She loves to draw, is interested in Korean folktales and works as a web designer.

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